IN THE CLAIMS

- 24. (Currently Amended) A method for suppressing optical defects in a paint system, wherein the paint system is one of a multicoat color paint system, a multicoat effect paint system, a multicoat color and effect paint system, a color refinish paint system, an effect refinish paint system, and a color and effect refinish paint system, comprising including an associative thickener in the paint system, wherein the associative thickener that is at least one of comprises a dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether and optionally a polyurethane-based associative thickener, wherein the alkyl in the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether is at least one of n-pentyl and n-hexyl.
- 25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the paint system comprises at least one basecoat layer and at least one clearcoat layer.
- 26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the basecoat layer is produced from an aqueous basecoat material.
- 27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the aqueous basecoat material comprises a polyurethane polymer.
- 28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the associative thickener is present in a basecoat layer.
- 29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the polyurethane-based associative thickener and the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether are present in a basecoat layer.
- 30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the optical defects comprise at least one of:

- i) light-colored spots, introduced by at least one of dried-up liquid residues and abrasion dust residues, which remain after abrading of defects in the paint system or in a surfacer that is to be coated with the paint system; and
- polishing spots, induced by the polishing of defects in the paint system, which is performed for the purpose of refinishing the paint system.
- 31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein the aqueous basecoat material comprises
 - (A) at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyurethane,
 - (B) at least one crosslinking agent,
 - (C) at least one pigment that is at least one of a color pigment, an effect pigment, and a color and effect pigment,
 - (D) at least one neutralizing agent,
 - (E) at least one inorganic thickener,
 - (F) an associative thickener that is at least one of comprising a dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether and optionally a polyurethane-based associative thickener, wherein the alkyl in the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether is at least one of n-pentyl and n-hexyl.
 - (G) optionally, at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyacrylate resin prepared in the presence of a water-soluble or -dispersible polyurethane, and
 - (H) optionally, at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyester resin.
- 32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the aqueous basecoat material, based on its overall weight, contains from 0.5 to 11% by weight of the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether.
- 33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the aqueous basecoat material, based on its overall weight, contains from 0.1 to 4% by weight of the polyurcthane-based associative thickener.

- 34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the aqueous basecoat material further comprises at least one additive.
- 35. (Previously Presented) The paint system prepared by the process of claim 24.
- 36. (Previously Presented) The paint system of claim 35, wherein the paint system is one of an original coating for a motor vehicle body, an industrial coating, an electrical components coating, a coil coating, a packaging coating, a plastics coating, and a furniture coating.
- 37. (Currently Amended) An aqueous basecoat material comprising
 - (A) at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyurethane,
 - (B) at least one crosslinking agent,
 - (C) at least one pigment that is at least one of a color pigment, an effect pigment, and a color and effect pigment,
 - (D) at least one neutralizing agent,
 - (E) at least one inorganic thickener,
 - (F) an associative thickener that is at least one of comprising a dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether and optionally a polyurethane-based associative thickener, wherein the alkyl in the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether is at least one of n-pentyl and n-hexyl,
 - (G) optionally, at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyacrylate resin prepared in the presence of a water-soluble or -dispersible polyurethane, and
 - (H) optionally, at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyester resin.
- 38. (Previously Presented) The aqueous basecoat material of claim 37, wherein the aqueous basecoat material, based on its overall weight, contains from 0.5 to 11% by weight of the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether.

- 39. (Previously Presented) The aqueous basecoat material of claim 37, wherein the aqueous basecoat material, based on its overall weight, contains from 0.1 to 4% by weight of the polyurethane-based associative thickener.
- 40. (Previously Presented) The aqueous basecoat material of claim 37 further comprises at least one additive.
- 41. (Previously Presented) A paint system comprising at least one basecoat layer; wherein the paint system is one of a multicoat color paint system, a multicoat effect paint system, a multicoat color and effect paint system, a color refinish paint system, an effect refinish paint system, and a color and effect refinish paint system; and wherein the basecoat layer is produced from the aqueous basecoat material of claim 37.